Aden

000 I should not have been at all surprised to hear that my old friend Ash Shami had had a hand in the matter. We were not far from the Yemen border and the presence of the Governor of Aden in the Lower Yafa hills where only one of my predecessors had been before, and that nearly twenty-five years previously, implying as it did a potential extension of our direct influence, must have been disturbing to that astute gentleman.

487 The path down the hill was still impassable for animals
312 when we left Al Qara to return to Aden two days later, so
562 we were obliged to leave by the other track on the other side of the hill which is used by the women to bring water from the wells in the valley far below.

643 We started the return journey in the early morning after
• 793 bidding our host, the Sultan, farewell and thanking him for his
778 kindness to us during the visit. We left him there alone, the
534 descendant of the old priest kings of pagan pre-Islamic times,
789 surrounded by his wild tribesmen who in times of trouble venerate him as they would a God, for is he not the custodian of the drum of the Yafais which is kept in some secret chamber in Al Qara only to be sounded when the Yafa nation is in sore distress, and has he not the magical gift of rain-making in times of drought, like his ancestors before him. These things they believe, but when the rainfall is sufficient and the Yafa people are free from want or oppression then they treat him with scant ceremony, which is the fate of all gods, ancient or modern, in the East or in the West.

000 The return journey, being downhill all the way, was much easier and quicker and we had to spend only one night in the open. On the second and last day of the return journey something went wrong with the lunch-time arrangements and I, mounted once again on the Sultan's donkey, rode past the rendezvous and did not realise that I had done so until I had travelled some distance. Loath to retrace my steps, I decided *to forgo lunch and to push on to the Government Guard Post* below which, on the way up, we had left our motor transport. I rode alone for most of the way, except for the Jemadar and his bosom companion, an elderly Qadhi, who had travelled up